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Letter dated 6 June 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

In accordance with the decision of the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2014-2016 at the election to be held in 2013, and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251, I have the honour to transmit the attached document containing the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as an official document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Pajo **Avirovikj**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/68/50.

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Annex to the letter dated 6 June 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidacy of the Republic of Macedonia for the Human Rights Council, 2014-2016

Voluntary commitments and pledges pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. The Republic of Macedonia is fully committed to the universal promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. As a diverse multicultural society, committed to democracy and the rule of law, Macedonia is devoted to further advancing its national and international policies for the protection and promotion of human rights, both being a national priority and an integral part of our foreign policy. Therefore, the Republic of Macedonia has put forward its candidacy for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2014-2016.

2. The Republic of Macedonia strongly supports the integration of human rights in all United Nations policies.

3. The Republic of Macedonia is committed to a robust and effective Human Rights Council and has been a staunch supporter of the Council and its mechanisms since its establishment. The Council must have a leading role in addressing human rights violations and promoting human rights. Its effectiveness and efficiency are of crucial importance for living up to the expectations declared at its creation by the States Members of the United Nations. The Council must respond to human rights violations effectively and in a timely manner. At the same time, its preventive and early warning capacities must be strengthened.

4. The Republic of Macedonia will continue to be actively engaged in the work of the Third Committee of the General Assembly, as a body of the United Nations with universal membership which deals with human rights issues.

5. The Republic of Macedonia supports the strengthening of the treaty body system. It is a party to the core global and regional human rights instruments. The Republic of Macedonia is committed to complying with its international human rights obligations and will continue to report regularly to the treaty monitoring bodies, as well as to distribute for general discussion their conclusions and recommendations.

6. With a view to strengthening the protection of human rights, the Republic of Macedonia pledges to consider signature/ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

7. The Republic of Macedonia will continue to cooperate with and support the subsidiary bodies and mechanisms of the Human Rights Council. Macedonia extended a standing invitation to all special procedures in 2004. It pledges to work

with special procedures mandate holders, to discuss and disseminate their recommendations among the relevant authorities, civil society and the general public.

8. The Republic of Macedonia fully supports the independence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and its valuable role in promoting and protecting human rights, including its work on mainstreaming human rights throughout the work of the United Nations.

9. The Republic of Macedonia remains strongly committed to the universal periodic review mechanism and considers it a crucial achievement of the reform process in that area. The universal periodic review process is a valuable instrument of dialogue on human rights issues and policies on both the national level and in Geneva. Its proper follow-up is expected to ensure meaningful progress in national human rights policies and practice. The Republic of Macedonia was under review in May 2009 and the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (A/HRC/12/15 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1) was adopted by the Human Rights Council in September 2009. The universal periodic review resulted in 42 recommendations and the Republic of Macedonia agreed to implement all but one. The mid-term review report was submitted in February 2012 (available from upr-info.org). The Republic of Macedonia will continue to support the smooth functioning of the universal periodic review process and will ensure an effective follow-up to the recommendations of the universal periodic review.

10. The Republic of Macedonia pledges to promote the realization of all human rights — civil, political, economic, social and cultural — on the basis of international human rights law and the understanding of the strong interdependence between development, peace and security and human rights. The Republic of Macedonia remains committed to promoting multilateralism as an effective tool in the defence of human rights.

11. The Republic of Macedonia pledges to support initiatives at the regional and international levels to combat religious, ethnic, national or linguistic intolerance and assure adequate protection for all minorities, as well as initiatives to foster interreligious and intercultural dialogue — as it has demonstrated by hosting global and regional forums on dialogue among civilization, cultures and religions.

12. The Republic of Macedonia is fully aware of the importance to further promote cooperation between government and civil society by ensuring the inclusion of a strong, free and independent civil society voice in efforts to improve human rights at the national and international levels.

13. With a view to strengthening the protection of human rights at the national level, the Republic of Macedonia further commits to the following:

(a) Implementation of the judiciary reforms aimed at ensuring a functional and efficient justice system for the exercise of human rights;

(b) Further implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the strategic priorities arising thereof;

(c) Implementation of the Roma Strategy and Action Plans, in compliance with the Strategy and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015;

(d) Advancement of the rights of women and girls;

(e) Implementation of laws and policies to prevent and combat violence against women and girls in all its forms, including domestic violence;

(f) Advancement of the rights of the child;

(g) Advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities;

(h) Stepping up of efforts to mitigate the effects of the economic policies on the vulnerable groups;

(i) Continuous harmonization of the national legislation with the international human rights standards;

(j) Publication of national reports, as well as reports and conclusions of the international human rights bodies, at the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (mfa.gov.mk), and strengthening further the mechanisms for the discussion and implementation of the recommendations;

(k) Upholding the independence of our national human rights institutions, including the Ombudsman and the National Commission for Protection against Discrimination, in line with the Paris Principles.

14. Recognizing the importance of integration of the human rights-based approach into its policy and governance, in 2012 the Government of the Republic of Macedonia established a high-level intersectoral human rights commission headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

15. Emphasizing the importance of the international protection of human rights, the Republic of Macedonia hereby further commits to the following:

(a) Further advancement and development of the international human rights norms as one of the central United Nations activities;

(b) Universal ratification of the human rights conventions;

(c) Enhanced cooperation with global and regional organizations related to the issues of human rights promotion and protection;

(d) Cooperation with the relevant United Nations mechanisms for human rights;

(e) Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals;

(f) Contribution to human rights promotion throughout the world by supporting the initiatives for adopting documents concerning the advancement of human rights and freedoms for all, in particular of the most vulnerable groups.

16. The Republic of Macedonia remains dedicated to upholding and promoting the highest standards of human rights in a manner that has an evident effect on the real lives of the people of the world. The Republic of Macedonia pledges to work with all Human Rights Council members in an open, constructive and cross-regional manner to achieve that goal.